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STATE FOR SCA C.GUEST, EUR/RPM R.CARLAND AND EAP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/16/2019
TAGS: PREL MARR MOPS EAID AS
SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN FM SMITH TO ATTEND AFGHANISTAN
CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 24422

Classified By: Acting POLCOUNS John W. Crowley. Reasons: 1.4(b)(d).

¶1. (SBU) Foreign Minister Stephen Smith's staff have confirmed he will participate in the Netherlands-hosted International Conference on Afghanistan in The Hague on March ¶31.

¶2. (C/NF) According to the Dutch Embassy, however, as late as Friday afternoon, March 13, FM Smith was considering turning down the invitation in order to register the GOA and Prime Minister Rudd's anger at NATO's failure to invite the PM and other ISAF contributing nation leaders to the NATO Summit to discuss Afghanistan. FM Smith's chief of staff also told the Dutch ambassador that Canberra had instructed its missions in Paris, Berlin and The Hague to deliver strong demarches over the matter.

¶3. (SBU) The Australian Ambassador to the EU, Alan Thomas, had sent a sharply-worded letter to NATO SYG de Hoop Scheffer on March 5, circulated to all NATO permreps, also expressing Australia's deep unhappiness over the lack of a discussion on Afghanistan at Strasbourg.

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